

Complete In Christ

A study in the book of Colossians

Lesson Four

“Let No One Defraud You”

In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul tells the Corinthian church, “but I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” **Simplicity** is something that the world rarely holds in high regard. It means **uncompounded; uncomplicated; single or unmixed; pure and unadorned**. Satan, since the beginning of time has tried to distract God’s people from the **simplicity of the cross**. Continually he tries to mix in other ingredients to pollute the purity of our faith. The Colossian church had stumbled right into this dangerous trap and we are no less vulnerable.

Read Colossians 2:11-14

In verse 11 Paul refers to “...the circumcision made without hands...”

- 1) Circumcision is symbolic of the stripping of the carnal nature and was an outward sign to the Israelites that they had come into a covenant relationship with God. Christ fulfilled the law of circumcision and has brought us into the circumcision made **without hands**. Read Romans 2:28 & 29. Explain in your own words what this means to you.

- 2) Our “hands” represent our works. The fact that Jesus gave us a circumcision made without hands is especially significant. Our salvation rests in the **finished work of Christ alone**. Do you ever find your hands trying to add to that work? What does Galatians 2:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 tell us about this?

- a. Does this mean that we shouldn't do good works? How does the exhortation in James 2:18-20 harmonize with our total reliance upon grace, the **unmerited** favor of God? See also Matthew 3:8 and Ephesians 2:10. What are James, John the Baptist, and Paul saying to us here? What point are they making? Share your thoughts.

Verses 13 and 14 tell us that "...having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us...He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."

Forgiven! Not only has Christ wiped the slate clean, but He has taken out of the way the law we could not keep. He cleared away the requirements which made us ineligible.

- 3) Are you walking in that freedom or are there heavy chains of **requirements** you are still lugging around? What, if any, are the areas of "legalism" you still wrestle with?

What does Romans 10:2-4 say about these things?

- 4) Read verse 15 of Colossians 2. What does it mean that Christ has disarmed principalities and powers? See Ephesians 6:12. What does this mean to you personally?

Paul says in verse 16, “Therefore let no one judge you....”

- 5) **Why** should we let no one judge us? Read this verse *with its context in mind* and share the point Paul is trying to make here. For more insight see Romans 7:4-6; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 10:19-23.

Matthew 7:1 turns this admonition back around to us, saying, “Judge not that you be not judged.” Are there areas where you find yourself judging others? Do you find that areas where you might struggle with legalism in your own life are the same areas where you struggle with a critical and judgmental attitude towards others? Ponder that and ask the Lord to reveal to you any attitudes in your heart that need to be confessed and laid down at the foot of the cross.

Read through chapter 14 of Romans.

- 6) How does Paul tell us in Romans 14:1 that we are to **respond** to those who are “weak” in the faith? What is the warning that he gives us?
- a. As you read through this chapter in Romans, who is it that Paul is considering weak? Does this change your perspective in any way?
- 7) Romans 14:23 concludes with the statement that, “...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” How should this Scripture influence our perspective of the “gray” areas in which we differ? How do we discern between what is gray and what is “black and white?” Share your thoughts.

- a. Read the verses that come before that in Romans 14:19-22. What is the **ultimate attitude** Paul gives us to follow?
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- 8) Are there times when we are called to judge? Read 1 Corinthians 5:2 & 3 along with 6:2 & 3 and share your thoughts.

In verse 18, Paul says, “Let no one defraud you.” (Amplified) or “...Cheat you out of your reward.”

- 9) Continuing on in verse 18, what are some of the other errors the Colossian church had fallen prey to according to this verse?

- 10) What kind of **extra-biblical** teachings do you see creeping into the church today?

- a. What, according to verse 19 is the greatest danger of extra-biblical teachings?

Read Colossians 2:20 – 23

In verse 23 Paul says, “These things indeed have an **appearance** of wisdom...”

There are many things that have an **appearance** of wisdom, or spiritual maturity. Throughout the ages there have been different “outward appearances” that man has connected to purity and holiness, such as: no make-up, no dancing, no movies, high collars, long skirts, not eating certain foods, etc. Man forever looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the **heart**.

- 11) Can you think of some other outward appearances we sometimes mistakenly use to judge spiritual character?

It is so important for us to rest our dependence upon the **finished work of Christ alone**. Anything else that distracts our attention away from Him to reliance upon other substitutions is like building our house upon sinking sand. We may like the beautiful view, and that sand may feel real stable for awhile, but when the tide comes in, the sand will shift.....and it will take us right along with it.

There is only **one solid foundation** that will remain sure through every storm and season of our lives. That foundation is **THE ROCK**, who is Christ Himself. Everything else, be it legalism, false mysticism, asceticism (deprivation of the body), human philosophy, traditions, New Age concepts, or “old age” heresies, Christ has **taken out of the way**, having **nailed it to the cross!**

- 12) What has the Lord most impressed upon your heart as you went through this lesson?